

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 NEA-14 ACDA-19 DLOS-07 SAJ-01

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3587

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAREUR

USNMR SHAPE

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3308

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,GR, TU

SUBJECT: GREEK/TURKISH AEGEAN PROBLEM

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR AND GREEK MFA SECRETARY GENERAL REVIEWED GREEK-TURKISH AEGEAN PROBLEM. GOG APPEARS DETERMINED TO PURSUE SOLUTION THROUGH TALKS WITH GOT BUT AT SAME TIME REMAINS PREPARED TO DEFEND IF NECESSARY WHAT IT REGARDS AS LAWFUL GREEK RIGHTS IN DISPUTED AREA. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING COURSE OF CALL ON VLACHOS, SEC GEN OF FONOFFICE THIS MORNING, I AGAIN MADE ALL THE POINTS CONCERNING NEED FOR RESTRAINT AND CARE IN RELATION TO GOT
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INITIATIVES IN THE AEGEAN. I ASKED HIM FOR LATEST INFORMATION.

3. CLACHOS SAID TURKISH HYDROGRAPHIC RESEARCH SHIP IS BEING TRACKED. HE COULD NOT SAY EXACTLY WHERE IT WAS, BUT HE SEEMED TO FEEL IT CLEAR IT HAD NOT YET ENTERED DISPUTED AREA. HE ALSO CONFIRMED OUR INFORMATION THAT TURKISH NAVAL UNITS HAD PROCEEDED TO NATO EXERCISE "GOOD FRIENDSHIP". REPONDING TO MY QUESTION, VLACHOS SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN SHIPS WOULD RETURN.

4. I ASKED VLACHOS WHAT GOG WOULD DO IF SHIP ENTERED DISPUTED AREA. HE RESPONDED "WE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE TO SHOW THE FLAG". HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS MEANT HAVING GREEK NAVAL VESSEL IN AREA WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY BE UNDER STRICT INSTRUCTIONS TO AVOID ANY CONFRONTATION. I PURSUED THIS FURTHER BY NOTING THAT A RATHER DELICATE SITUATION COULD OCCUR IF GREEK WARSHIP TRACKED RESEARCH SHIP AND TURKISH NAVAL UNITS RETURNED TO JOIN IT. IT SEEMED TO ME, I ADDED, THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER FOR THE GOG TO SEEK EARLIER DISCUSSIONS WITH GOT TO FORESTALL POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A SITUATION, WHICH DESPITE ALL GOOD WILL IN THE WORLD COULD CONCEIVABLY LEAD TO AN INCIDENT.

5. VLACHOS SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE TURKS WERE DELIBERATELY SEEKING TO PROVOKE GOG. HE REPEATED THAT GOG CONSIDERED USE OF TURKISH NAVAL UNITS DESTINED FOR OPERATION GOOD FRIENDSHIP IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN TO ACCOMPANY THE RESEARCH SHIP TO ITS PRESENT LOCATION WAS "TRICKERY". HE ADDED THAT GOT IS FULLY AWARE THAT LOS CONFERENCE WILL BE OPENING SHORTLY IN CARACAS AND THAT THERE WILL ALSO BE OPPORTUNITY IN OTTAWA FOR DISCUSSIONS. LAST GREEK NOTE HAD MADE EMINENTLY CLEAR GOG PREPARED TO TALK. THIS MADE LATEST TURKISH PROVOCATION DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. IN THIS CONNECTION HE CONFIDED THAT HIS OWN JUDGMENT HAD BEEN WRONG BECAUSE

HE HAD ADVISED GOVERNMENT THAT AFTER ITS NOTE GOT WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO ENGAGE IN ANY PROVOCATIVE ACTS BEFORE OTTAWA TALKS. IN ANY EVENT TALKS BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH
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FOREIGN MINISTER IN OTTAWA HAD BEEN ARRANGED ON BASIS OF LONG STANDING PLANS AND WOULD COVER WHOLE SERIES OF POLICY ISSUES OF CONCERN TO TWO COUNTRIES, ONE OF WHICH WAS AEGEAN OIL EXPLORATION PROBLEM.

6. VLACHOS REITERATED THAT WITH BEST WILL IN WORLD GOG SIMPLY COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT PERMIT THE GOT TO VIOLATE WHAT GOG CONSIDERED TO BE ITS LAWFUL RIGHTS AND THAT GOG WOULD HAVE TO REACT. HE ADDED THAT WHILE GREEK PUBLIC OPINION HAD NO WAY TO EXPRESS ITSELF BECAUSE OF

CONTROL OF PRESS, NEVERTHELESS STRONG OPINION EXISTED IN
ARMED FORCES AND IN HIS VIEW "AT LEAST TOP THOUSAND SENIOR
OFFICERS WERE IN STATE OF HIGH EXCITEMENT OVER TURKISH ACTIONS
AT THIS POINT."

7. I AGAIN STRESSED THAT, WHILE THIS MIGHT BE CASE, IN
MY VIEW ISSUES INVOLVED CERTAINLY DID NOT IN ANY WAY
WARRANT MILITARY CONFRONTATION OR THREATS OF RESORT TO
FORCE. IN LIGHT OF OUR OWN DISCUSSION OF THE DETAILS, I
SUGGESTED PROBLEM APPEARED TO BE UNIQUELY SUITABLE FOR
DISCUSSION, THROUGH WHICH A MUTUAL AGREEMENT LEADING TO
SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT EVOLVE. I ADDED IT WAS
HARD TO BELIEVE THAT GREECE AND TURKEY, AS INTEGRAL
PARTS OF NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK, WOULD LOSE SIGHT OF THE
OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE OF GREEK-TURKISH FRIENDSHIP.
VLACHOS AGREED AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT TURKEY ALSO
UNDERSTAND THAT GREECE AND TURKEY "CONDEMNED TO
FRIENDSHIP".
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